

Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

Emerald Ash Borer Control

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

On a recent camping trip to Great Smoky Mountains National Park, it bore remembering that the park only allows outside firewood that is certified as being heated to the point that undesirable insects hitching a ride on the wood would be killed.

One of the undesirable insects that is already in the park is the emerald ash borer. This Asian insect was first detected in the United States in Michigan in 2002 and has killed tens of millions of ash trees across the U.S.

In its native range, emerald ash borer is attacked by a variety of predators including several parasitoid wasps and indeed, three wasp species have been introduced to North America to help control the pest. Researchers recently took a closer look at the impact of the insect predators here in the United States.

The study indicated that parasitism – by both introduced and native wasps – helped control emerald ash borer populations, especially after their numbers naturally declined when fewer ash trees were available for them to feed on.

Non-native parasitic wasps can help prevent widespread ash tree death in newly infested forests, and the scientists recommend that they be released as soon as emerald ash borer has been detected.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.